

discussion. Make no mistake, Democrats are going to fight to make the ballot access easier, challenge all attempts to disenfranchise American citizens, and get the influence of big special interest money out of politics.

#### CHINA

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, finally, on China, news reports continue to suggest that President Trump is close to cementing an agreement with Beijing that, unfortunately for America and for American workers, would fall far right of expectations.

Earlier this week, the New York Times reported that China is drafting new laws on foreign investments to pacify the United States, but those new laws do not include any changes to how China forces American businesses to transfer technology and know-how as the cost of doing business.

If our best companies were allowed to sell to China unfettered, they would have huge amounts of profit, and they would employ huge amounts of people in America more. China doesn't let that happen, but they can sell freely here.

The President was right to target China. The President was right to impose tariffs on China. The President will have taken defeat out of the jaws of an almost victory if he now backs off for the sake of a photo op or some brief changes in what China purchases and forsakes American wealth and American workers, while China is stealing our wealth and jobs from our workers every single day.

If President Trump accepts a short-term purchase of American goods in exchange for a reduction in our tariffs without structural reform to China's predatory trade practices, shame on him. If he thinks that photo op will help him; it will not. If he thinks a temporary, little bump in China buying more soybeans or more steel products will help; it will not. He will lose because one of the best things he has done—something I, many other Democrats, and many other Americans have praised him for—will be gone. I have publicly given the President credit when he has taken on China.

As I said, Americans have lost millions—trillions—of dollars of wealth and millions of jobs to Chinese IP theft. The President has been right to challenge China on those issues. His tariffs have brought China to the negotiating table, but now that China is at the table, President Trump must not walk away without achieving what he set out to achieve.

In short, to cut an unacceptable deal—a weak deal, a photo-op deal—at this stage would be to squander the historic moment to put American businesses, workers, and inventors on a level playing field at long last, and it would be viewed as a capitulation by the President on one of his signature issues. It would be the inverse of what he did on North Korea.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Eric E. Murphy, of Ohio, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit.

#### MEDICARE

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I am sure everyone remembers the Democrats' ObamaCare promise: "If you like your health care plan, you can keep it." That promise was named PolitiFacts' "Lie of the Year" in 2013 after it became clear that millions of Americans would not, in fact, be able to keep their healthcare plans. There are no worries about being deceived on the question of keeping your insurance this time around because Democrats are loudly and proudly announcing their intention of getting rid of private insurance with their Medicare for All plan.

At a CNN townhall in February, the junior Senator from Vermont was asked: "Will these people be able to keep their health insurance plans, their private plans through their employers, if there is a Medicare for All program that you endorse?"

The answer of the Senator from Vermont was no.

Another Democratic candidate for President, the junior Senator from New York, was recently asked: "Should ending private insurance, as we know it, be a Democratic . . . goal? And do you think it is an urgent goal?"

Her response: "Oh yeah, it is a goal . . . an urgent goal."

If you like your health insurance, you definitely will not be able to keep it. In fact, the employer-sponsored insurance that you have today would be

illegal under the Democrats' plan. In the minds of Democrats, Americans are supposed to be enthusiastic about Medicare for All because it would give them free healthcare. The problem, of course, is it will not really be free. Americans are still going to be paying for healthcare; it will just be in the form of much higher taxes.

A left-leaning think tank modeled a version of the Medicare for All plan proposed by the junior Senator from Vermont and found that it would cost a staggering \$32 trillion over 10 years. To put that in perspective, the entire Federal budget for 2019 is less than \$5 trillion. That is Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, defense spending, education spending, law enforcement, infrastructure—everything. In other words, Democrats are talking about increasing Federal spending by more than 60 percent each year just for healthcare. One Medicare expert estimates that doubling the amount of individual and corporate income tax collected would not be enough to cover the cost of Medicare for All.

I don't know about my Democratic colleagues, but I don't know a lot of working families who could afford to have their tax bill literally double. Of course, this is assuming that the cost of the program would be limited to \$32 trillion. The Medicare for All proposal the House Democrats released last week could substantially exceed the \$32 trillion estimate because, unlike the Vermont Senator's plan, it includes funding for long-term care, a notoriously expensive part of the healthcare system.

Democrats' last attempt to have the government fund long-term care fell apart before it was even implemented because the program was not financially viable.

It is not just the cost of Medicare for All that is completely unrealistic; the timeline for implementation is as well. House Democrats' proposal would put every American on Medicare for All within 2 years. We have 2 years to completely do away with healthcare as we know it and create an entirely new healthcare program to cover almost every single American.

I am sure most Americans remember the fiasco that was ObamaCare implementation. The Obama administration had 3½ years to get ObamaCare up and running, and they couldn't even build a working website in that amount of time. The ObamaCare exchanges were intended only to cover a tiny fraction of the number of people who would be covered under Medicare for All. The idea that the Federal Government could smoothly transition all Americans over to an entirely new government-run healthcare program in 2 years is absolutely ludicrous. Making the attempt would cause Americans an incredible amount of pain. Every aspect of this proposal would cause Americans an incredible amount of pain.

There are the heavy taxes that would be required to even partially pay for

this program and the bureaucracy and inefficiency that would come with any government attempt to take over healthcare.

Then there is the rationing of care that would inevitably come along. Democrats are promising that these would be plans with generous coverage, but what happens when Democrats don't have the money to pay for that coverage? Well, they can raise taxes higher, of course.

Yet they will also undoubtedly turn to the rationing of care that we have seen in other countries with socialized medicine. The majority leader noted on the floor last week that Britain's National Health Service canceled 25,000 surgeries in the first quarter of last year alone.

I could go on. I could talk about the long wait times Americans would experience under Medicare for All. I could talk about the fact that the Democrats' proposal would end the prohibition on government funding for abortion, meaning that your tax dollars would go toward ending the lives of preborn babies, whether you want them to or not.

I can talk about the threat that Medicare for All represents for seniors because, make no mistake, this program would do away with Medicare as we know it and the promises that have been made to seniors in this country. Seniors would receive care under the new plan, but it would not be the plan they signed up for, and there is no guarantee that they would receive the benefits the Democrats are promising.

If I went on about all the ways that Medicare for All is a bad idea, none of my colleagues would have a chance to speak for the rest of the day or probably tomorrow, for that matter, either. Suffice it to say that Medicare for All would be a very bad deal for the American people.

Let's hope that our colleagues across the aisle halt their mad rush toward socialism before the American people get stuck with this government-run nightmare.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

NOMINATION OF JOHN FLEMING

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I rise today in support of Dr. John Fleming's nomination to be the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development, otherwise known as the Administrator of the Economic Development Administration, or EDA.

I view this as an opportunity not only to speak about the qualifications of a former colleague of mine—we served in the House together—but also to highlight the EDA's work in my home State of West Virginia.

The EDA did not always play an active role in West Virginia, which is really odd when you consider that we have no shortage of economic development and infrastructure needs and challenges in our State. Yet, at my insistence and through the collaboration

of my staff, we have turned a corner. Today, we are beginning to see real investments that will make a lasting difference in West Virginia.

To highlight the insignificant amount West Virginia received before I became a Senator, in the 2 years prior to my swearing in—2013 and 2014—the State received a total of \$200,000 from EDA outside of normal planning grants. These were mostly for technical assistance.

When I came to the Senate and realized this, I made it a top priority of mine to ensure that West Virginia secured more Federal dollars to develop our economy and create new opportunities. I made it clear to EDA at the time that the status quo was absolutely unacceptable.

I am glad to say we are now achieving results, as evidenced by the close to \$30 million that EDA has invested in West Virginia since 2015. By bringing everyone to the table and working with State and local economic development officials, we were able to foster a renewed focus on West Virginia needs to the benefit of these local projects.

In addition to EDA's bringing on a State representative, which was crucial—a State representative to focus just on our State, to directly interface with our communities—we are ensuring dollars will go toward projects that will contribute to the future of West Virginia.

At a time when my State and other parts of the country are seeking to reorient their economies toward industries of the future—like technology and advanced manufacturing—these are the kinds of projects that the Federal Government should be prioritizing.

Let me give you a few examples. Just last month, I joined local officials in Greenbrier County to announce \$1.5 million in EDA funding to bring potable water to 50 homes and a new business that will employ over 200 people. Keep in mind, these are projects that are collaborative projects. It is not just solely Federal dollars that go into it. There are city, county, and private dollars as well.

In November of last year, EDA announced that it would invest \$1 million in the city of Bluefield for the Exit 1 project, a 15-acre development that will serve as a catalyst for business growth and create almost 250 jobs. And 1 year ago in March, the EDA invested close to \$5 million in just 1 day to make infrastructure improvements at three separate sites across the State. This funding will promote job growth and retention of jobs in these three counties through added efficiencies in essential infrastructure.

One of these projects I will talk about is in northern West Virginia, where I am originally from, and it will be to rehabilitate the Wheeling Corrugating steel plant complex in Brooke County, all the way near the top of the northern panhandle. This project will, at a minimum, create 95 new jobs, retain 45 jobs, and attract

private capital beyond an initial investment of more than \$1 million. This isn't funding for a conference of stakeholders or another study just to sit on a shelf and collect dust. These are real dollars going toward real projects. Our local leaders know what they need, and many of the local economic development officials tell me they have been "studied to death."

I am happy to say that through our efforts, local and State officials are getting the help they have been asking for. Dr. Fleming and I spoke at length about these efforts when he visited my office and during his nomination hearing before the EPW Committee. He assured me of his commitment to follow Congress's intent to continue the programs under EDA, as evidenced by the increased in funding EDA received through the appropriations process.

As a successful businessman and former Member of Congress from Louisiana—and as he has made clear in his conversations with me and through his testimony—I trust that Dr. Fleming understands the needs of communities like those in West Virginia. I look forward to working with him after he is confirmed, and I invite him, as I have before, to come to my home State to see the great work that is being done with the investments that the EDA has chosen to make in West Virginia.

When the Federal Government serves as a willing partner for all parts of the country, regardless of whether they are urban or rural, we can promote economic growth and opportunities for all Americans. As chair of the EPW Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee and as a member of the Appropriations and Commerce Committees, I will continue to advocate for programs that contribute not just to a brighter future for my State of West Virginia but also for the entire country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TITLE X

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, since day one of the Trump administration, the Republicans have done everything they can to cater to an extreme rightwing base by undermining women's access to the healthcare they need and the healthcare providers they trust.

They have moved to roll back requirements that insurance companies include birth control as an essential health benefit, which would mean millions of women would go back to paying extra for birth control on top of their coverage. They have held votes on extreme abortion bans that would get in between a woman and her doctor. They have jammed the courts, even the Supreme Court, with partisans who have made clear they share